

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 02405 121626Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05

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P 121500Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0467

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB CS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE STRIKE AGAINST RECOPE

1. NEGOTIATIONS OVER TERMS OF A NEW LABOR CONTRACT BETWEEN THE COSTA RICAN REFINERY (RECOPE) AND ITS UNION (SITRAPEQUIA) HAVE BEEN GOING ON OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS, THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, OVER THE GENERAL ISSUE OF ALARIES. THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ANOTHER IN A NUMBER OF LABOR/MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE BEING WORKED OUT AS THE CONTRACTS NEAR THEIR EXPIRATION DATES. THE RECOPE-SITRAPEQUIA CONFLICT IS COMPLICATED BY RECOPE'S FIRING OF A WORKER ON THE BASIS OF HIS JOB BEING ELIMINATED. THE UNION CLAIMED INSTEAD THAT THE WORKER WAS FIRED BECAUSE HE REPORTED THAT HIS BOSS HAD THREATENED HIM PHYSICALLY, AND HAS DEMANDED HIS REINSTATEMENT.

2. AS NEGOTIATIONS WENT ON, SITRAPEQUIA'S CONCERN OVER THE FIRED WORKER BECAME AN INCREASINGLY CENTRAL ISSUE, THE TONE OF STRIKE THREATS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY STRIDENT AS THE ISSUE HAS CONTINUED UNRESOLVED. PRESIDENT ODUBER, ON JUNE 9, REQUESTED THAT THE UNION COLLABORATE WITH THE GOCR TO SEEK A SOLUTION AND THE UNION RESPONDED BY PRESENTING ITS CASE TO HIM

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PAGE 02 SAN JO 02405 121626Z

DIRECTLY. SITRAPEQUIA REPORTEDLY HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE LIMON

CIVIC COMMITTEE (THE GROUP THAT HEADED THE RECENT LIMON STRIKE, THE POWERFUL UNIONS OF JAPDEVA (RAILROAD AND PORT WORKERS), AND THE INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM WORKERS'S FEDERATION (REPORTEDLY LOCATED IN DENVER, COLORADO), IN CASE OF A STRIKE EVEN THOUGH SUCH A STRIKE IN A PUBLIC SERVICE IS ILLEGAL UNDER BOTH THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PENAL CODE.

3. BOTH VICE-PRESIDENT CASTILLO AND RECOPE PRESIDENT GASTON KOGAN HAVE INDICATED PUBLICLY THAT VITAL PETROLEUM SERVICES WILL BE MAINTAINED IN THE EVENTUALITY OF A STRIKE. KOGAN, IN STATEMENTS REPORTED IN JUNE 11 LA NACION WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE SITRAPEQUIA LEADERSHIP ACCUSING "CERTAIN UNION LEADERS" OF MAINTAINING EXTREME POSITIONS FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL GAIN AND HINTING THAT THE STRIKE IS PART OF A "PERFECTLY DESIGNED PLAN TO ANNIHILATE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND BRING THE COUNTRY TO CHAOS."

4. NEGOTIATIONS YESTERDAY, JUNE 10, RESULTED IN A GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL OFFERING: 1) AN INVESTIGATING COMMISSION MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF RECOPE, SITRAPEQUIA, AND THE GOCR TO STUDY THE CASE OF THE DISMISSED WORKER: 2) A SALARY RAISE OF COLONES 200 A MONTH RETROACTIVE FROM APRIL AND AN ANNUITY OF COLONES 75. SITRAPEQUIA LEADERS ARE REPORTED SATISFIED WITH THE PROPOSALS AS FAR AS THEY GO. BUT THEY ALSO WANT THE WORKER REINSTATED WHILE THE INVESTIGATION IS GOING ON AND WANT ADJUSTMENTS MADE IN THE SENIORITY SYSTEM TO REFLECT RECOPE'S TAKEOVER BY THE GOCR TWO YEARS AGO.

5. SITRAPEQUIA LEADERS ARE MEETING WITH UNION MEMBERS JUNE 11, TO INFORM THEM OF THIS LATEST STAGE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. SITRAPEQUIA SECRETARY-GENERAL GILBERT BROWN TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT CHANCES ARE 90 PERCENT THAT THE UNION, AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING WILL STRIKE RECOPE. ALTHOUGH THE RECOPE MANAGEMENT COULD PROBABLY KEEP THE FACILITIES GOING FOR A SHORT TIME, THE EFFECTS OF SUCH A STRIKE WILL BE FELT QUICKLY IN THE SAN JOSE AREA. WITH THE RECENT MEMORY OF THE LIMON STRIKE FRESH IN ITS MIND, THE GOCR WILL PROBABLY TAKE VERY QUICK ACTION TO REACH A SOLUTION IF SITRAPEQUIA MEETING RESULTS IN A DECISION TO STRIKE.

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PAGE 03 SAN JO 02405 121626Z

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Message Attributes

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